

PSYCHOLOGISTS ACT AGAINST DIANETICS

Claims Made for New Therapy
Not Backed by Empirical
Evidence, Group Says

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—The American Psychological Association today called on psychologists, "in the public interest," not to use in therapy the techniques "peculiar" to a new approach to mental health called Dianetics. It is outlined in a book of the same name.

The action was taken in a resolution unanimously adopted by the association through the Council of Representatives, its governing body, at its closing session.

The association stated that "in view of the sweeping generalizations and claims regarding psychology and psychotherapy made by L. Ron Hubbard in his recent book, "Dianetics," the American Psychological Association adopts the following resolution:

"While suspending judgment concerning the eventual validity of the claims made by the author of 'Dianetics,' the association calls attention to the fact that these claims are not supported by empirical evidence of the sort required for the establishment of scientific generalizations. In the public interest, the association, in the absence of such evidence, recommends to its members that the use of the techniques peculiar to Dianetics be limited to scientific investigations designed to test the validity of its claims.'"

The book, now a best-seller since its publication several months ago, has been the subject of discussion in psychological and psychiatric circles. The psychologists represent the first scientific group to take official action against it and did so only after long deliberations.

In explaining the action of the council, Dr. E. Lowell Kelly, a member of it and of the board of directors, said, "what we have here is a man who claims he has discovered an exact science of the mind and developed a technique of therapy which goes far beyond that known to psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis."

He described the techniques advanced in the book as "as a hodge-podge of accepted therapeutic techniques with new names."

One of the main objections to the book made by psychologists is its contention that anyone, having read it, may practice therapy successfully without danger to the patient. There is no evidence in support of this view and "considerable evidence against it," Dr. Kelly declared.

Mr. Hubbard is described by his publishers as "a mathematician and theoretical philosopher." The book is titled "Dianetics, the Modern Science of Mental Health, a Handbook of Dianetic Therapy." The preface states that the author has discovered a technique that "will invariably cure all psychosomatic ills and human aberrations."

In another recommendation, the council "strongly urged" the 8,000 members of the association, as individuals, to offer "tangible support, in all possible ways, financial and otherwise, to their colleagues whose connections with the University of California at Berkeley have been severed by recent action of the Regents."

Offered Proof, Says Author

Reached in Los Angeles, where he is lecturing, Mr. Hubbard said last night that he was ready to furnish to the American Psychological Association proof of the claims made in his book "Dianetics." He said that as long as a year ago, he made such an offer to the association but received no reply.

Mr. Hubbard said that he had already submitted proof of claims made in the book to a number of scientists and associations. He added that the public as well as proper organizations were entitled to such proof and that he was ready and willing to give such proof in detail.